

From the President's Desk

Dear Colleagues,

Is environmental history yet another field of specialisation within history departments or is it something different, something interdisciplinary? This might seem an 'academic' question of limited relevance at first glance. Yet, it has recently become clear to ESEH board members that it might be of practical, at least financial relevance. The European Science Foundation opened a call for creation of a network for research communities doing environmentally relevant work this fall. I saw this as a possibility to further our common interest. We would be enabled to hold small workshops, offer international education by means of summer schools and create a closer network than our conferences allow us to build. However, this call was issued by the ESF Standing Committee for the Social Sciences and after careful study of our possibilities the board members agreed that our chances of being accepted were too slim to merit the work such an application means.

The Standing Committee's list of topics for which programmes could be submitted included geography, demography and environmental sciences. The work of environmental historians is pertinent to environmental sciences. It is particularly relevant to the 'Global Change' community. By studying past examples of coping with change and its mitigation we can offer present society models how to cope. Yet, chances for funding of an ESF proposal under the title of environment were considered slim. One could complain that this reflects the disciplinary structure of academia. But it might also be that environmental historians in Europe, fighting for recognition of their interdisciplinary, yet historical work, have been too adaptive to the historical side of their network and have not done enough to develop their interdisciplinary partnerships. Some ESEH members are recognised as members of two faculties of their universities, within both a history department and a department of natural sciences. But this is not a solution for everyone.

Therefore, I want to encourage ESEH members to take part in an interdisciplinary conference held by IHDP, the International Human Dimensions Programme on Global Environmental Change of UNESCO which was founded in 1990. Their next 'Open Meeting', to address 'Global Environmental Change, Globalization and International Security: New Challenges for the 21st Century' will be held in October, 2005 in Bonn, Germany. Environmental History has been recognised as a session theme there. More information can be found at

their website: <http://openmeeting.homelinux.org/>. While this is not an ESEH meeting, I hope to see many of you in Bonn.

My second suggestion is rather long-term: We need to develop a curriculum for our students which will enable them to apply with more ease for grants in the environmental sciences. At the next General Assembly of ESEH, the executive board will suggest installing two Committees, one to investigate the possibilities and ramifications of how we could set up and finance a Centre for European Environmental History, which would then be responsible, for example, for holding the summer schools I mentioned above, and another Committee on Education in Environmental History. I hope that by installing these two committees, ESEH will be able to meet the challenges posed by the disciplinary structure of universities in order to provide knowledge useful for the globally changing present.

In preparation for the meeting in Florence, all your comments and suggestions on the formation of the committees, as well as any other business you wish to discuss at the General Assembly in Florence should be sent to Jan Oosthoek at your earliest convenience.

With my best wishes for a successful and rewarding autumn,
Verena Winiwarter

ESEH Conference Florence, 15–19 February 2005 – Latest Information

The third international meeting of ESEH is only a few months away and you can now register. More information of how to register is available from the conference website at <www.eseh2005.unifi.it>. Note that the registration deadline is 15 December 2004. Information about accommodation and transport can also be found on the conference website.

The preliminary programme of the conference is also available on-line at the conference website. A more detailed programme will become available in December and can be downloaded as a PDF file. We urge all presenters and panel organisers to check the details of their panels and report any errors to the conference organisers at <info.eseh2005@unifi.it>. All enquiries related to the conference should be directed to the same email address.

Nominations for Positions within ESEH

As you will know, the European Society for Environmental History is based on a democratic structure and one aspect of this is the election of members of the Executive Board and the Regional Representatives (RRs). The RR represents your region on the board of the ESEH. Together the RRs form a kind of council to advise the Executive Board, if you are interested in the details see the statutes on the ESEH website at: www.eseh.org under items 8 and 12. It is the Executive Board that governs the Society.

The Nomination Committee of the ESEH is seeking nominations for positions on the Executive Board. Existing Board members are eligible for re-election. The posts within the executive board are: president, vice-presidents (2), secretary and treasurer.

The Committee also seeks nominations for a new RR for the Nordic Countries. The present RR for the Nordic countries, Eva Jakobsson, will leave her post in February. If you want to suggest a candidate please contact the chair of the Nomination Committee Peter Brimblecombe <P.Brimblecombe@uea.ac.uk>. Note that candidates must be a member of ESEH and living in a Nordic country.

The nomination committee will draw up lists of nominees for the Executive Board and seek approval from the nominated candidates. The final lists of candidates will be made available from the end of November. The Committee will check on the willingness of nominated members to serve as Regional Representatives and prepare a non-contested list of Representatives for approval at the OGM in Florence in February 2005.

On-line Bibliography

Over the summer the on-line bibliography on the ESEH website has been made fully searchable and a number of new titles were added (see: www.eseh.org/bibliography.html). However, the number of bibliographical entries for 2003 and 2004 is far from impressive and certainly does not reflect the number of publications on European environmental history produced annually. We like to encourage the submission of any new or recent publications you are aware of to ESEH Secretary Jan Oosthoek <k.j.w.oosthoek@ncl.ac.uk>. Unfortunately the on-line submission forms on the ESEH website are no longer active. Please consult the formatting instructions for bibliographical entries available from the bibliography section on the ESEH website before submitting.

Another development has been the preparation of a grant proposal for expansion of the European environmental history bibliography by the Forest History Society and ESEH. The proposal was submitted to the Endowment for the Humanities (US) in July and the outcome will be known early next spring. This collaborative project will result in a comprehensive and authoritative bibliography of European environmental history. The titles will be collected by a team of European environmental historians under supervision of an ESEH co-ordinator and the results made available through the international, annotated Environmental History Bibliography (EHB) hosted by the Forest History Society and linked with the ESEH website.

Suggestions for any additional funding possibilities for the bibliographical project are welcome and should be sent to the ESEH secretariat.

European Society for Environmental History

Executive Board:

President: Verena Winiwarter, *University of Klagenfurt and University of Applied Life Sciences, Vienna*
 Vice-President: Christian Pfister, *University of Bern*
 Vice-President: Poul Holm, *University of Southern Denmark*
 Secretary: Jan Oosthoek, *University of Newcastle upon Tyne*
 Treasurer: Ulrich Koppitz, *University of Düsseldorf*

Ex officio:

Mauro Agnoletti, *University of Florence*

Regional Representatives:

Benelux, **Petra van Dam**, The Netherlands
 British Isles, **Fiona Watson**, Scotland
 Czechia & Slovakia, **Leos Jelecek**, Czechia
 Francophone Countries, **Geneviève Massard-Guilbaud**, France
 Germanophone Countries, **Andreas Dix**, Germany
 Hungary, **Lajos Racz**, Hungary
 Iberian Peninsula, **Muanuel Gonzáles de Molina**, Spain
 Italy, **Marco Armiero**, Italy
 Nordic Countries, **Eva Jakobsson**, Norway
 Russia & additional Eastern European Countries, **Daniel Alexandrov**,
 Russia

ESEH aims to promote environmental history in Europe, by encouraging and supporting research, teaching and publications in the field. The ESEH maintains their web site at <www.esch.org>.

Notepad Editor: Jan Oosthoek

Items for the next Notepad should be sent by 7 January, 2005 to the address shown below.

All correspondence should be directed to the secretariat:

ESEH Secretary, Dr Jan Oosthoek
 103A Windsor Avenue, Gateshead NE8 4NX, Tyne & Wear, UK
 E-Mail: k.j.w.oosthoek@ncl.ac.uk